

616.9792  
Ai255

Distributed by:  
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AIDS

**INFORMATION  
FOR THE  
GENERAL PUBLIC**

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# A



*This is  
not an  
intro-  
duction  
to AIDS.*

## W hat is AIDS?

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AIDS — Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome — causes the body to lose its natural defenses against disease. The body then becomes open to attack by a whole set of illnesses — ranging from mild infections to life-threatening conditions.

Some people with AIDS develop a rare form of pneumonia, *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP), caused by an organism that has no ill effect on healthy people. Others develop Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), a cancer that affects the skin and lining of the blood vessels, and may spread throughout the body. Also, unusual bacterial and fungal infections are often found in persons who have AIDS.



*This is  
not a  
setting  
for  
AIDS.*

## Who gets it?

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Researchers agree that most people are *not* at risk for AIDS. AIDS has occurred within specific groups of people. More than half of AIDS patients are gay or bisexual men between the ages of 25 and 40. Some patients are heterosexual men and women who share needles to inject drugs. A very few are hemophiliacs (persons with hereditary blood clotting problems) who require the injection of a blood product. And, there are cases of children who apparently have contracted AIDS.

Blood donors are at no risk of getting AIDS and no one should refuse to receive a blood transfusion if it's medically indicated. The chance of developing AIDS from a blood transfusion is so low that any risk is greatly offset by the benefits.

# D



*This  
won't lift  
the lid  
on AIDS.*

## What causes AIDS?

No one knows for sure what causes AIDS. Antibodies to a recently discovered virus (HTLV-III/LAV) have been found in the blood of most AIDS patients. It is not known whether this virus is the direct cause of AIDS, or is a result of having a damaged immune system. But, further research will hopefully lead to early diagnosis, treatment and prevention of AIDS.

All current scientific research indicates that AIDS is associated with intimate sexual activity that involves the repeated exchange of certain body fluids, and with sharing needles to inject drugs. There is *no evidence* that AIDS is spread by:

- toilet seats, bathtubs or showers
- handshakes or other nonsexual physical contact
- dishes, utensils or food handled by a person with AIDS
- doorknobs, linens, clothing or other articles touched by a person with AIDS
- sneezing, coughing or spitting
- being around a person with AIDS — *even if contact is daily!*



# S



*This  
won't  
open the  
door to  
AIDS.*

## What are the symptoms?

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Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained tiredness, combined with headache, dizziness or lightheadedness
- continued fever or night sweats
- weight loss of more than 10 pounds which is not due to dieting or increased physical activity
- swollen glands in the neck, armpits or groin
- heavy, dry cough that is not from smoking and has lasted too long to be a cold or flu
- thrush (a thick whitish coating of the tongue or throat), which may be accompanied by a sore throat
- shortness of breath
- bruising more easily than normal
- purple or discolored growths (patches) on the skin, possibly first seen on the ankles and legs, or the mucous membranes inside the mouth
- unexplained bleeding from any body opening or from growths on the skin or mucous membranes.

Remember, other illnesses can have the *same* symptoms. However, if such symptoms persist, consult a physician.

**For more  
information,  
call:**

**1**

**800-**

**AID-**

**AIDS**

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### ***HTLV-III***

Recently, a blood test was licensed to detect antibodies to HTLV-III, a virus which is believed to be associated with AIDS. The test will help protect the nation's blood supply. Donor blood that tests positive will not be used for transfusion. However, this test is *not* medically effective as a screening device for AIDS. For more information, call **1-800-AID-AIDS** toll-free.

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